

By: Graham Gibbens, Chairman of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
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To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
2 August 2012

Subject: Boundary Reviews

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report provides information and invites Members' comments on various boundary reviews of district councils within KCC's area.

Introduction

1 (1) KCC has recently been notified of a number of district boundary/governance reviews being conducted in its area. Set out below are details of these reviews. The consultation period for some of these has closed but all Local Members were made aware and given the opportunity to submit their comments on the proposals direct to the relevant District/Borough Council.

Swale Boundary Review

1. (1) The Local Government Electoral Boundary Commission (LGEBC) commenced an electoral review of Swale Borough Council wards in May 2011. A consultation on council size started on 23 August 2011, followed by information gathering with Swale Borough Council on proposed ward boundaries in November 2011.

(2) On 2 April 2012, the LGEBC published its draft recommendations (**Appendix 1**) and started a consultation that ran until 8 June 2012. The final recommendations will be published on 14 August 2012.

(3) The LGEBC's draft recommendations propose that Swale Borough Council should continue to have 47 councillors, comprising five single-member, 15 two-member and four three-member wards. Three maps showing are available at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/swale-electoral-review. A copy will also be available at the meeting.

(4) The LGEBC has confirmed that this ward boundary review will have no impact on the Swale electoral divisions within Kent County Council's administrative area.

Tonbridge and Malling Electoral Boundary Review

1. (1) The LGEBC is conducting a review of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in order to improve the levels of electoral representation in the borough, which have become imbalanced since the last review undertaken in

[insert year]. Currently, the number of electors represented by the councillors in 38% of the wards varies by more than the borough 10% average; with the councillors in Kings Hill ward representing 46% more electors than the borough average.

(2) On 17 April 2012, the LGCE published its draft recommendations (**Appendix 2**) and started a consultation that ran until 25 June 2012. Relevant local County Council Members were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals during the consultation period. Three maps showing the ward recommendations are available at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/tonbridge-and-malling-electoral-fer>. A copy will be available at the meeting.

(3) The LGCE's draft recommendations propose that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council should continue to have 53 councillors, comprising six three Member wards, 17 two Member wards and one single Member ward.

(4) The LGCE has confirmed that this ward boundary review will have no impact on the Tonbridge and Malling electoral divisions within Kent County Council's administrative area.

Shepway

1. (1) In November 2011, Shepway District Council established a working group of councillors to look at introducing predominantly single member wards and reducing the number of councillors. Shepway District Council currently has 46 councillors.

(2) The working group submitted its report to the Shepway District Council meeting on 21 March 2012 (attached at **Appendix 3**). In response to the report, the District Council passed the following resolutions:

“(a) To support the submission of a proposal to the LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) incorporating the proposed new arrangements which demonstrate how the Council would operate with 38¹ member wards where necessary according to current electorate size, future electorate projections and geographical considerations.

(b) That the overall system of governance should continue to be the strong leader and cabinet model with independent overview and scrutiny.”

(3) Shepway Council has been informed by the LGBCE that it will commence the review in autumn 2012 and will aim for this to be concluded by late 2013. Relevant local County Council Members are aware of the proposals.

(4) The Committee will be kept informed of progress with this review.

¹ Amendment to working group's recommendation passed by Council

Sevenoaks Community Governance Review

(1) In November 2011, Sevenoaks District Council published terms of reference for a community governance review (formally known as a parish review) in respect of the whole of its area.

(2) The District Council's draft proposals were published in May 2012 and responses are invited by 31 July 2012. However, it has been agreed with Sevenoaks District Council that KCC can submit its response, or confirm that it does not have any comments, after this meeting. County Councillors for the Sevenoaks area have been made aware of the review and invited to submit their comments direct to the District Council or to this Committee in time for this meeting. Sevenoaks District Council will prepare final proposals by late August/early September 2012, which will be published before the end of November 2012 with the aim of them taking effect on 7 May 2015.

(3) A copy of the draft recommendations for each parish and related maps are attached as **Appendix 4**.

(4) Members are requested to consider whether they wish to submit any comments on the Sevenoaks Community Governance Review and notes that the Committee it will be kept informed of progress with this review

RECOMMENDED: The Committee is invited to:

(a) note that the consultation on the Electoral Boundary Reviews for Swale and Tonbridge and Malling areas which have now closed and that Local Members were given the opportunity to submit comments direct and that the Committee will be kept informed of progress with these reviews.

(b) note the submission made to the Local Government Electoral Boundary Commission by Shepway District Council and that this Committee will be kept informed of progress with this review.

(c) consider whether it wants to submit any comments on the Sevenoaks Community Governance Review and notes that it will be kept informed of progress with this review

Peter Sass
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Background Documents:

Swale

The full recommendations and detailed maps are available on the Commission's website at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/swale-electoral-review.

Tonbridge and Malling

The full recommendations and detailed maps are available on the Commissions website at

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/tonbridge-and-malling-electoral-fer>